

The Mens Excellence or The Secretarie Delight

Which is a well established and ascertained unto the worthiness of the Pen by
university men, the highest disreverence and Equivocall of the Antiquitie
by the Antiquitie of the Pen, the Civill and the Pen, is hereby demonstrated

Together with an insertion of some Penmanship Examples of all the Penmanship
of Exports as also in addition of some mathematical operations for
Writing, Making of the Pen, Holding the Pen, &c.

Written by Martin Bissingsley M^o Sin. & Act of Writing

Nemo satis est bene aliquid scire, nisi etiam fiat venuste.

The Greeke Citheryne with other Poets never yet extant
are hereunto by the Author exactly added.

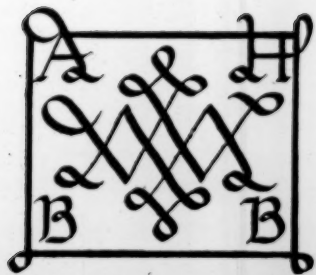
Acce^ded to by Jo: Suckling
Acce^ded to in Popeshead

Richard

Donnell

Thomas

John



1st Edition published from "my house in Bush Lane 1618." see p. 4.

Engraved title & 27 other plates & 28 engraved plates in all

Preface of 3 pp Text & 19 pp. Text at end

Another copy in A. H. S. library has no title & only 19 plates. No date

The copy in Pepys' library has a portrait prefixed & 22 " 1644

The copy in Brit. Museum " " "

A fine copy (now in New York) measured $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ "

contained the portrait "Adelphi Suae xxvii" & 28 plates & 22 pp of text (vs)

The imprint as this copy but with "Sudbury's name wiped out"

Title p. in Engford Bill has imprint "sold by Nathaniel Browne
at y^e great North door of S^t. Paul's Church. (no date)


#6.7 35

Billingsley, M.

Guillaume de la Roche
verus possessor
hujus libri

Feb. 24. 1620.

Serius aut estius metam propinquamus D. n. m. J. m.

Liber w^m glancok 
Febr: 24. 1626



 24. 1626

Liber w^m glancok
Feb: 24. 1626

The Mens Excellence

Or

The Secretaries Delight

Wherein are set forth the most excellent and rare qualities of y^e Pen, by
 comparison with men, and the most excellent and rare qualities of y^e Pen, by
 comparison with the most excellent and rare qualities of y^e Pen, by
 comparison with the most excellent and rare qualities of y^e Pen, by

Together with an insertion of some Divers Examples of all y^e several
 of Experiments as also an addition of some most excellent and rare
 Writing, Making of the Pen, Holding the Pen, &c.

Written by Martin Bismassey M^r Sin^r & Act of Writing

Non satis est bene aliquid facere, nisi etiam fiat venuste.

The Greek & Hebrew, with other Letters never yet extant
 are herewith by the Author exactly added.

Printed by Io: Sturges
 George Baskin in Popeshead

1



To the most Excellent Prince Charles Cr.

Most Gracious Prince

I humbly present to yo^r Majesty
Gratious Regard, and come with an Addition for a further good, with yo^r honorable
Patronage, full sort into the world: I humbly present to yo^r Prince & patience,
Beseeching for a sign of all perfection, so to bless yo^r Majesty in all perfections, as
may give me cause to y^e vertuous in all Professions, to admire yo^r Excellency, with all
love and service, and make my happiness, under reason to be a servant, to yo^r gracious a
Maister.

Your Majesty,
in all humbles:

Martin Billingeley.





The Preface to the R E A D E R.



*T*is an opinion amongst some, not so erroneous as ignorant, that Coppy-Bookes of this nature are of no validity. What reason they can alledge to strengthen so fond a conceit, I know not; sure it is some private one, they are so loath to produce it. For mine owne part, I see no reason why these that are grauen should not be as profitable to a Learner, as those that are mecrely written; so they be exactly performed according to the naturall straine of a true Artist; each Letter being cut according to its true proportion, and losing not the life deliuered in the Example.

B

Certaine

Certaine I am, there is no man living can write so exactly, but that even in the writing of sixe lines, hee himselfe shall bee conscious to himselfe of some imperfections: which, by directions to the Grauer (being a good Workeman and carefull) may be easily helped and made perfect for imitation. Howbeit I deny not, but that oftentimes the Grauer may wrong the Writer, if he be not very observant in every touch of a Letter: and the amends which he may make him in the well cutting of some one or two hands, will not counterwaile the credit which he shall lose by his ill graving and unmatrall mishaping of some few Letters in one very Example.

For this Booke ensuing, I know there are some (through an envious Curiosity, rather then a true Iudgement) which will herein finde many infirmities: yet let me tell them, it is an easier matter to pry into the imperfections of another, then it is to amend their owne errors: and he that findes the greatest faults, commonly is the unblest to amend the least; since Art hath no greater enemy then Ignorance. This is my glory; That I have not plaid the Theefe with any man, (though it were in my power to have done it.) But quicquid scripsi, scripsi: whatsoever I have written, I have done it my selfe: For I would be much ashamed, that any man should thinke, I had beene brought up in a place of such scarcity, and under so bad a Master, or that there were in me such a poverty, that I must needs goe a thieving for my skill. I thanke God there is nothing in it, which I am not able upon an instant to better. And therefore if any man list to be contentious, let him be contentious; but let him not wrong him in his doings, who is able to doe better then

then himselfe: I speake of those that thinke themselves excellent and past compare, who indeed (be their names neuer so famous) beare about them but the shadow of Art. And howsoeuer the spirits of such men are so eleuated and ray-sed euen beyond themselves, that they thinke basely of euery mans doings but their owne; though their consciences tell them they are but as empty vessels, which alwaies make the greatest sound. It shall suffice me, that (I) know what they haue in them, and how far their skill extendeth; and so rest myselfe contented, till Time and Truth (the Tryers of all mens actions) shall distribute to euery one according to his desert. In the meane time, as this little Booke hath founde gracious acceptation at the hands of him to whom it was first primately intended: So I hope it will haue the approbation of all such as are well disposed, and beare affection to so excellent, commendable and necessary an Art: assuring them, that had I had my right, I should haue giuen them better content, and greater satisfaction of the Pens perfection: As for Carpers and ouer-curious-ey'd men, I passe not, as knowing myselfe euery way (in the Art I professe) a Worke-man that needeth not to be ashamed.

From my house in Bush-lane neare
London-stone, Decemb. 22. 1618.

Bz

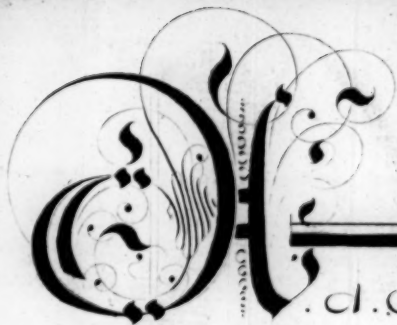
M. B.



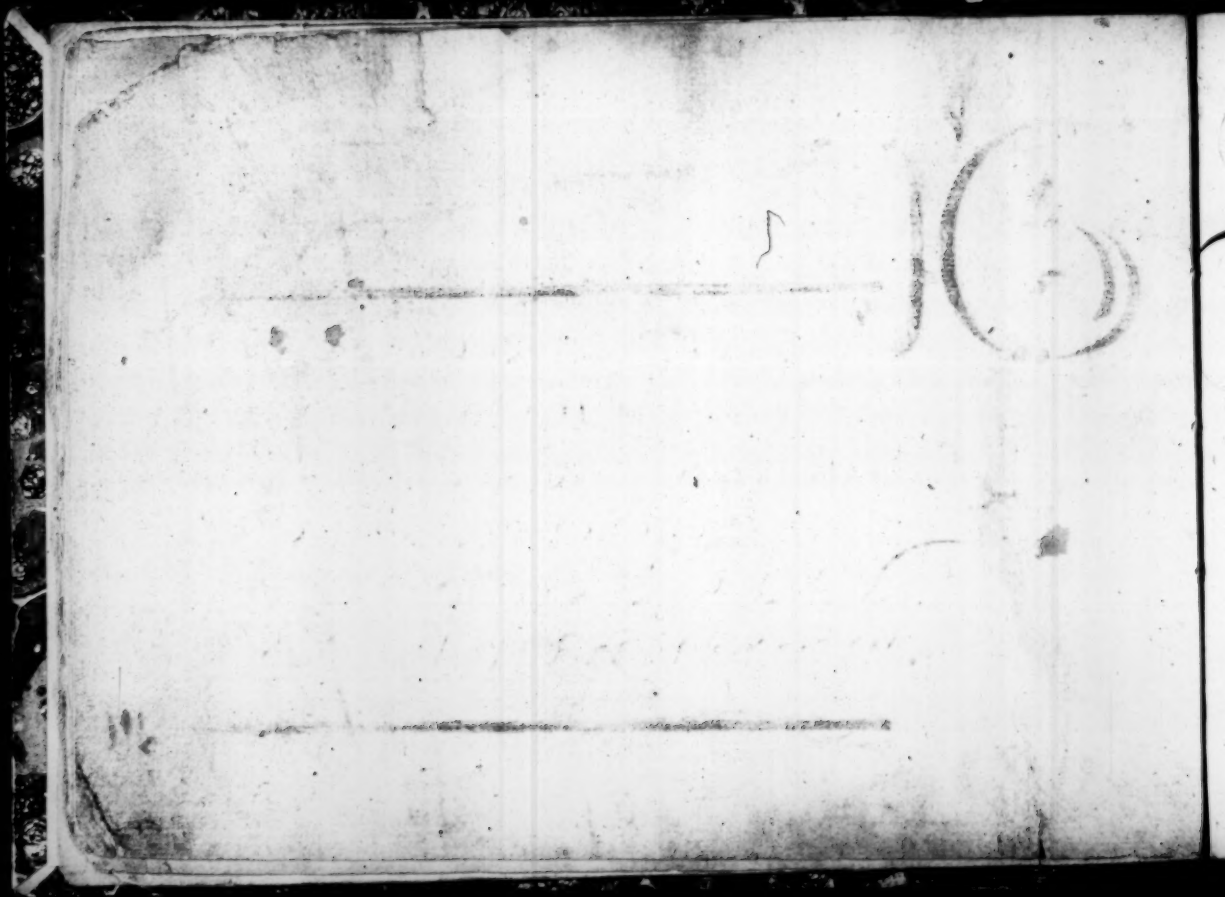


a a a a a a b b b b b b c c c c c c
E e e e e e f f f f f f g g g g g g h h
I i i i i i j j j j j j k k k k k k l l l l l l
M m m m m m n n n n n n o o o o o o p p p p p p
Q q q q q q r r r r r r s s s s s s t t t t t t
U u u u u u v v v v v v w w w w w w x x x x x x
y y y y y y z z z z z z





.d.d.d. z.z.z.c.c.c.d.
s.e.e.f.f.f.ö.ö.ö.h.h.h.
j.j.j.k.k.k.l.l.l.m.m.m.
n.n.n.o.o.o.p.p.p.q.q.q.
r.r.r.s.s.s.t.t.t.u.u.u.
w.w.w.x.x.x.y.y.y.z.z.z.




7 Simulacron of vertue

in great men is honourable but of Greatnesse
is dangerous: for many times it breaketh
the necke of one or both the Qualls: But it
never faileth of hindring their dutie and
faithfull service to their King & Countrey.

Emulatio et proximi exercitus gloria, sequitium repulerat

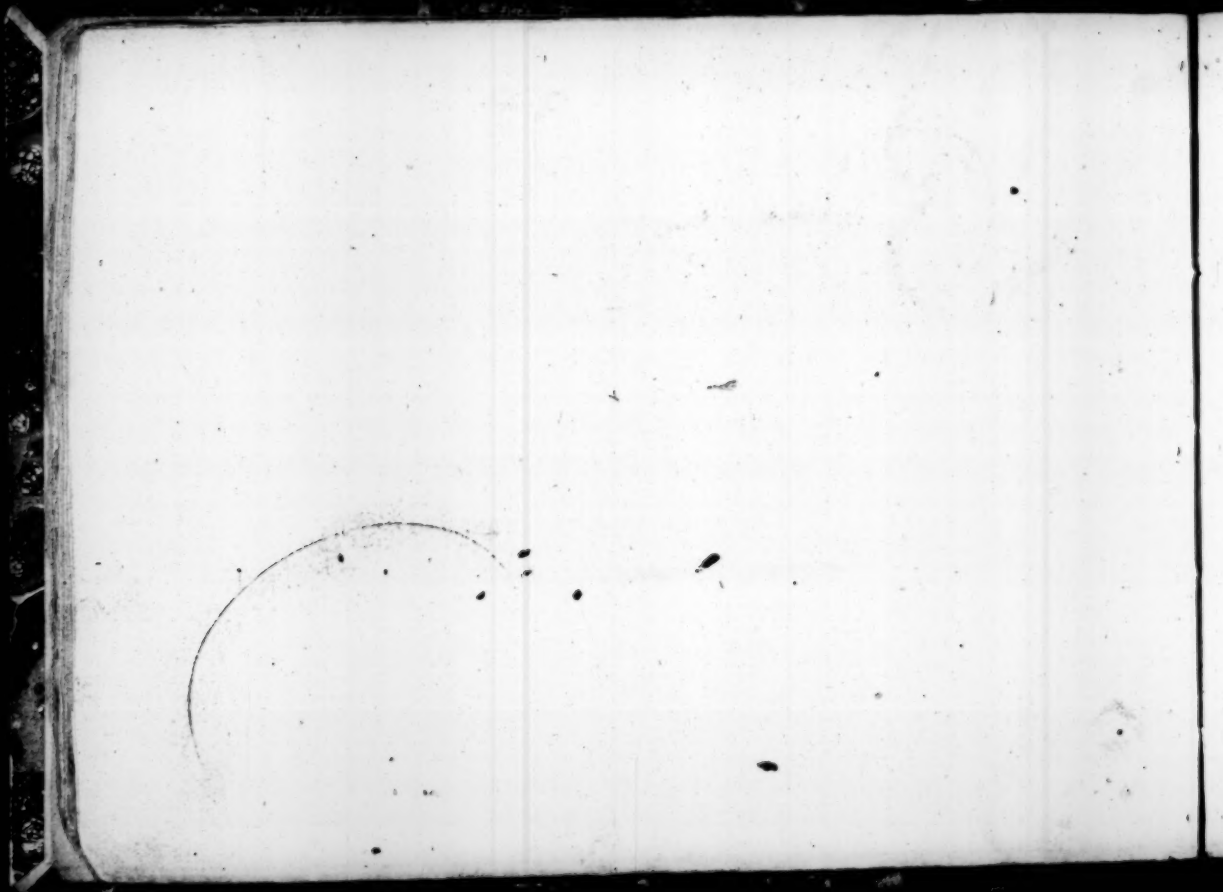




S Creator let into mans braine insusd ~
By Let the hand each severall worke is taught ~
By Patient tomes the end of all things ~
Without the which there is no perfection wrought ~
By Patient thou shalt see Den mans skill
By Creator let so maist thou have y^e will.

Gratia. arte. ac patientia omnia perficiuntur.

p *per*



Account not up to the place of Honor lest
thou be made to come downe againe wth shame;
for prosperitie is more dangerous then adver-
sitie and more perissh on the right hand of sinne
would by pleasure the left hand of some degree.

Billingsley

Qui se exaltat humiliabitur



invident homines maxime paribus

aut inferioribus, cum se ceteros sentiunt, illos autem dolant exolasse:
sed etiam superioribus invident, saepe vehementer, et comagis, si intolere:
vultius se iactant, aequalitate in communis invidi exstantia dig-
nitatis aut fortuna suae transcunt. Invidiis invidia imbecillitas
esse debet: nihilque homini est tam timendum: quam invidia:
nihil innocenti suscipi invidia tam optandum, quam aequum iudicium.

Billingsley

Invidia, virtute parata, gloria, non invidia putanda est.





condicionis miseros administrandum civitatum et provinciarum: in
quibus diligentia plena simulatum est negligentia vituperationum:
ubi severitas periculosa est, liberalitas iniqua, sermo invidiosus, con-
assentatio peccatiuosa. fons omnium familiaris, multorum animus
exaltus, iocunditas occulta, blanditia aperta. Venerit igitur puerorum
expectant, praesentibus innoxii, abundantia deservant. Sunt qui
quod sentiunt, clamari optimum est, invidiam metu non audent.

Sunt



ms. 96

A. A. a. a. a. B. B. b. b. b. C. C. c. c. c. d. d.

e. e. e. e. e. f. f. f. f. f. g. g. g. g. g. h. h. h. h. h. i. i. i. i. i. k. k. k. k. k. l. l. l. l. l.

m. m. m. m. m. n. n. n. n. n. o. o. o. o. o. p. p. p. p. p.

q. q. q. q. q. r. r. r. r. r. s. s. s. s. s. t. t. t. t. t.

u. u. u. u. u. v. v. v. v. v. w. w. w. w. w. x. x. x. x. x.

y. y. y. y. y. z. z. z. z. z. aa. aa. aa. aa. aa. bb. bb. bb. bb. bb.

cc. cc. cc. cc. cc. dd. dd. dd. dd. dd. ee. ee. ee. ee. ee. ff. ff. ff. ff. ff.

11 11 11 11 11



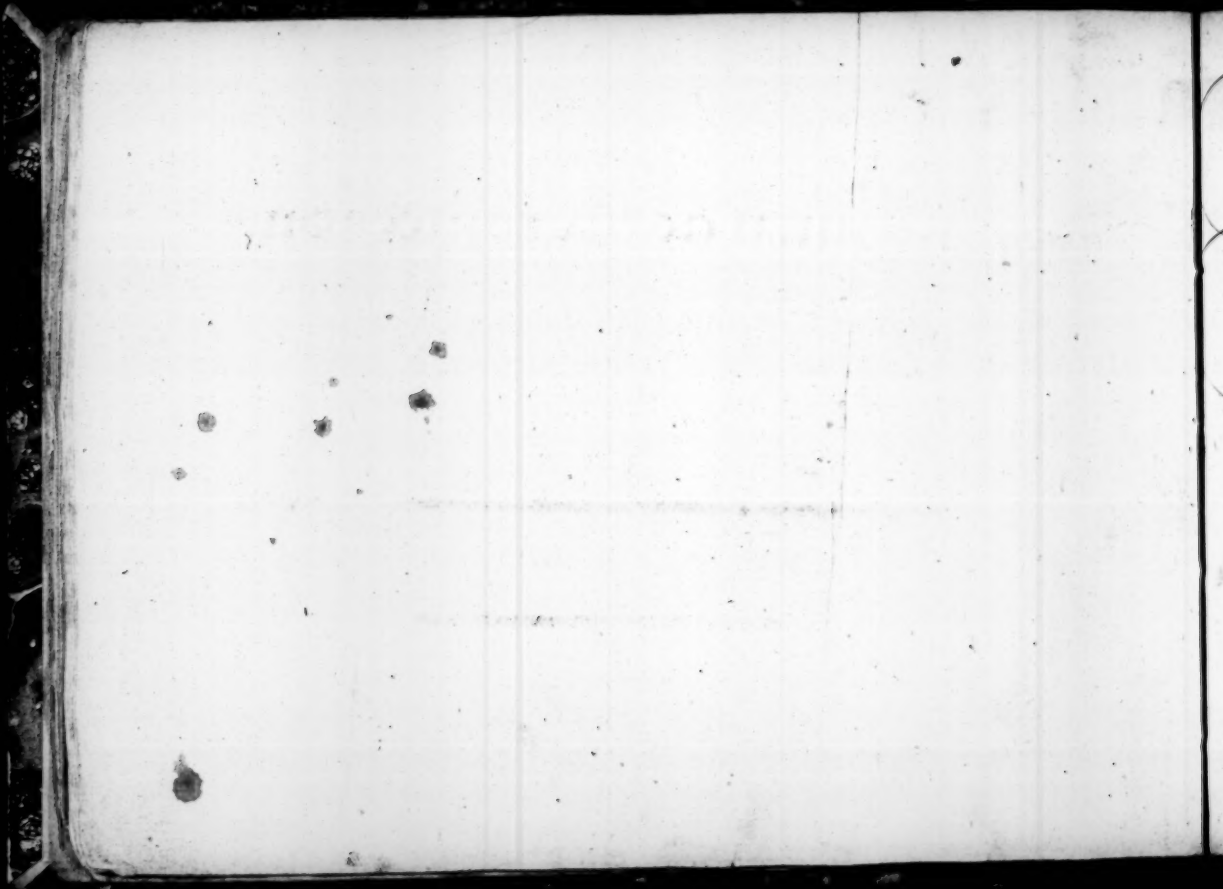
Waxe naturallie given nobilitie standing in great vntill
 wrought to saue a marvellous good content of the schuler.
 & of the artifice. And if so be you can procure any thing in
 the schuler to be neuer so little commendable or praiseworthy
 we presentlie stand on t'orned, till we have a Tannypell we
 saue blesing forth & proclaimed, & wrought of the schuler.



Suchmen as are comodious

to none but onlie to themselves are not worthy to be encouraged or
esteemed in a commonwealth. For we are not borne for our
selves but for our Country; and we ought not by any means
to preferre our owne private before the publique good, nor
vertuall profit before the generall commoditie of our Country.

Non nobis solum nati sumus.

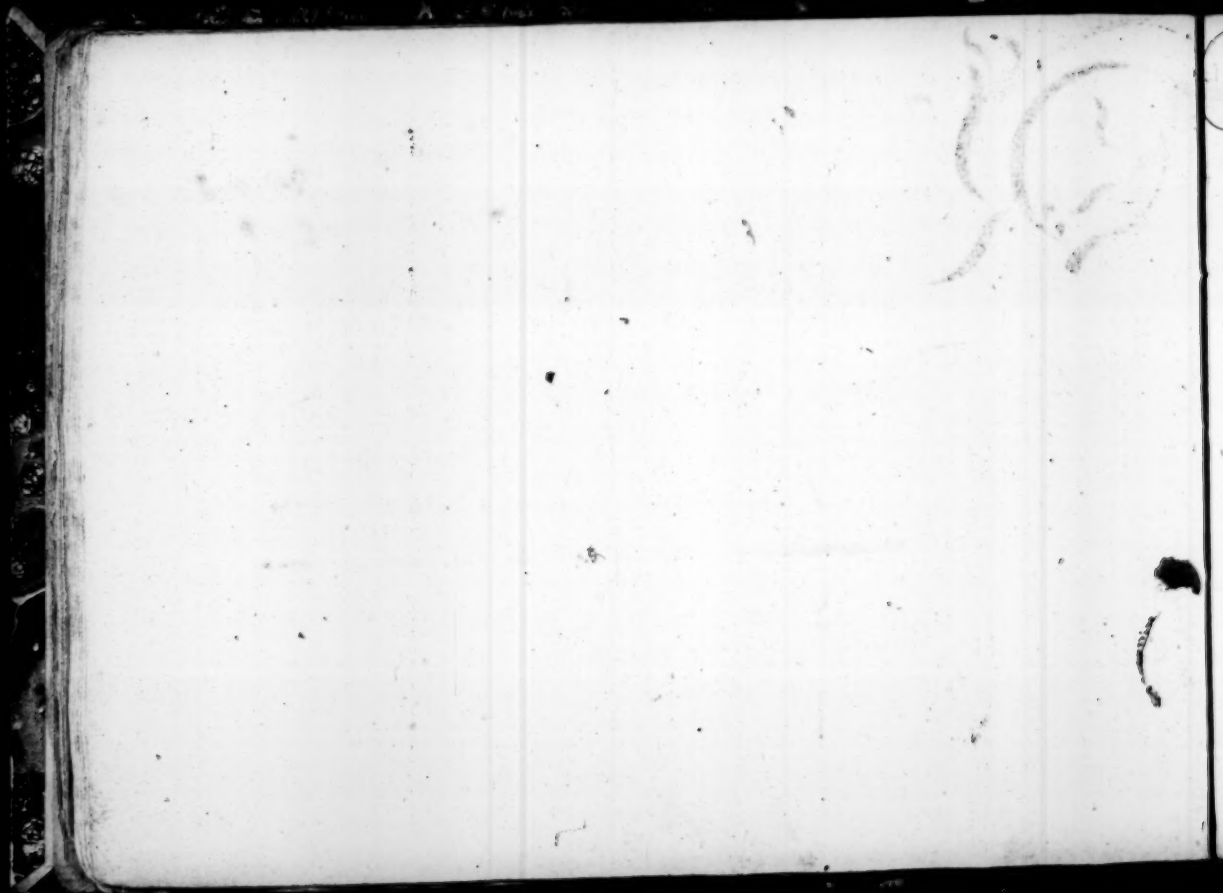


18 18 18

affnes is obno-
~~scious~~ ^{scious} to all
ambush

affnes is obnoxious to all manner of ambush & surprize.
it is soft at hand, but harts at length; and having vented
they first fixie, die like a dogge that eats last besting.
Therefore men must looke before they leape, & consider
the danger before they runne into it; least as they goe
on to small seeds, they come off wth lesse gaine.

Peccat per necessario qui perinat



The tongue & the hand are y^e same member. yet the tongue sheweth a reason cause not y^e
 ending of them. The tongue is affected y^e more readily. but y^e hand in this is
 y^e more dangerous: that what is spoken maie be spoken by supposition of mis-
 taking, or disageement in the verities, or death. whereas that of y^e hand
 appereth to posteritie: for y^e tongue y^e speaketh & is over, & remaineth ad a thousand
 years.

Vox audita recit sed littera scripta manebit

a. a. b. c. d. e. f. g. h. i. j. k. l. m. n. o. p. q. r. s. t. u. v. w. x. y. z.



1
The receipt of your good fortune comin

The receipt of your good fortune coming to my knowledge, I
doubt not but take occasion hereby to praise God & rejoice
wth you therein; hoping you as my affection most move to
write: so it will please you to attest your standing good
to remember to continue me in your number of friends
wellwishes, & am better willing than able to do you service

2
I will send you to the same

Master Billington



A. a. B. b. C. c. D. d. E. e.
F. f. G. g. H. h. I. i. K. k.
L. l. M. m. N. n. O. o. P. p.
Q. q. R. r. S. s. T. t. V. v.
W. w. X. x. Y. y. Z. z. A. ac.



19

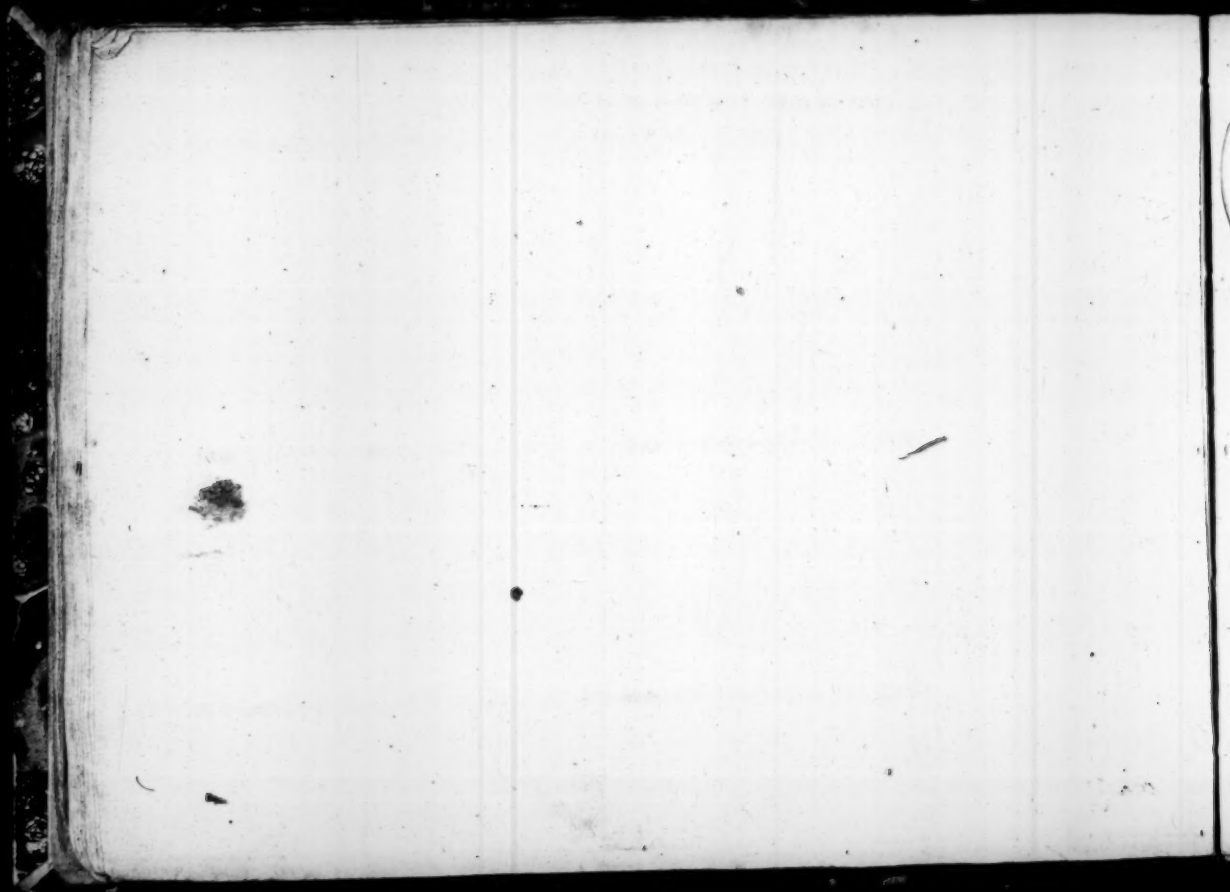
All that thine Hand findeth to doe.
doe it quickly: for there is neither
Art. Invention. Knowledge. nor
wisdom in y^e Graue whither y^e
A. b. c. d. e. f. g. h. i. k. l. m. n. o. p. q. r. s. t. u. v. w. x. y. ^{ye. s.}

17

ST

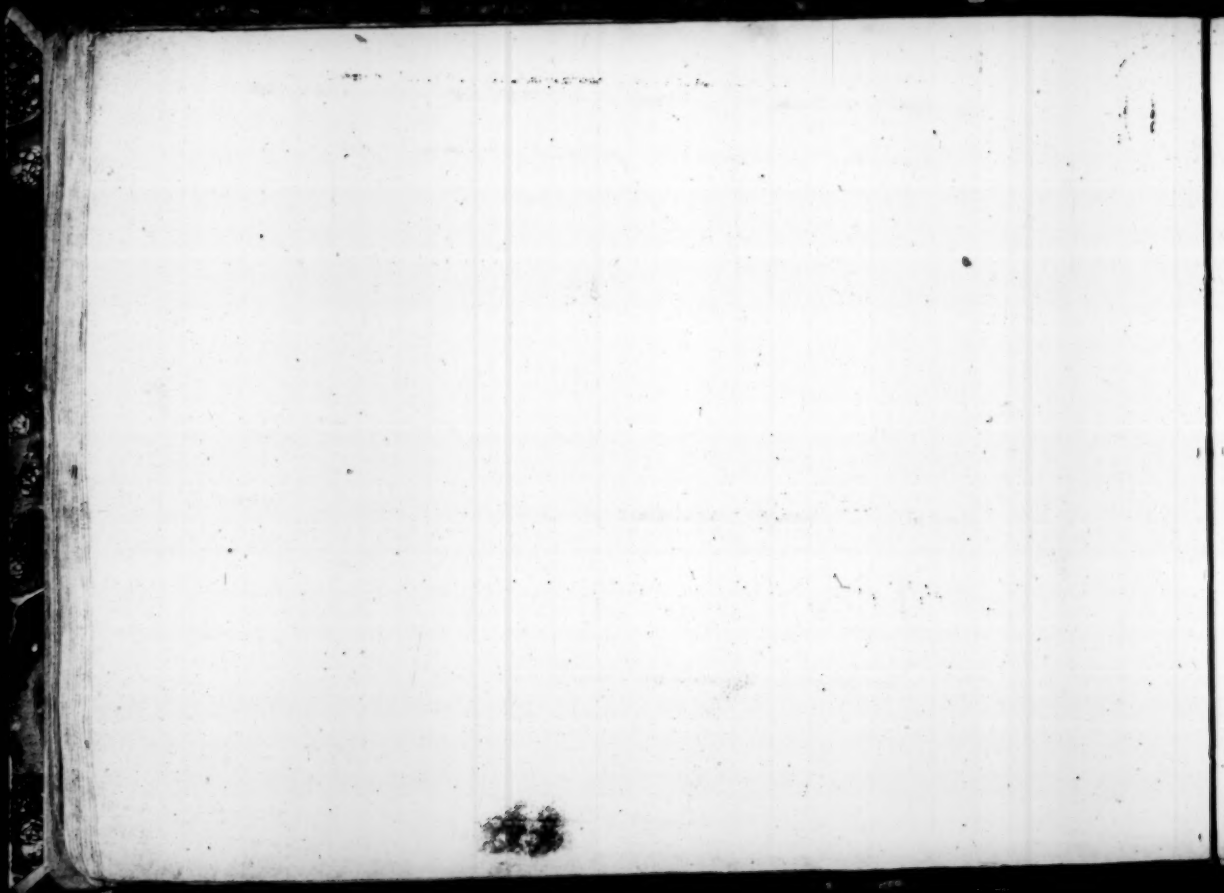
A a a a a b b b b c c c c d d d d e e e e f f f f g g g g
 g g g h h h h i i i i j j j j k k k k l l l l m m m m n n n n
 o o o o p p p p q q q q r r r r s s s s t t t t
 u u u u v v v v w w w w x x x x y y y y z z z z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M
 N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z



When an humour is Strong and predominant, it not onlie converteth his proper nutriment, but even that which is apt for contrarie humours, into it owne nature and qualitie. Of like force is a Strong and wilfull Desire, in the minde of man: For it nott only feeds vpon agreeable motions, but makes euen these reasons, which are Stronger against it, to be most for it.

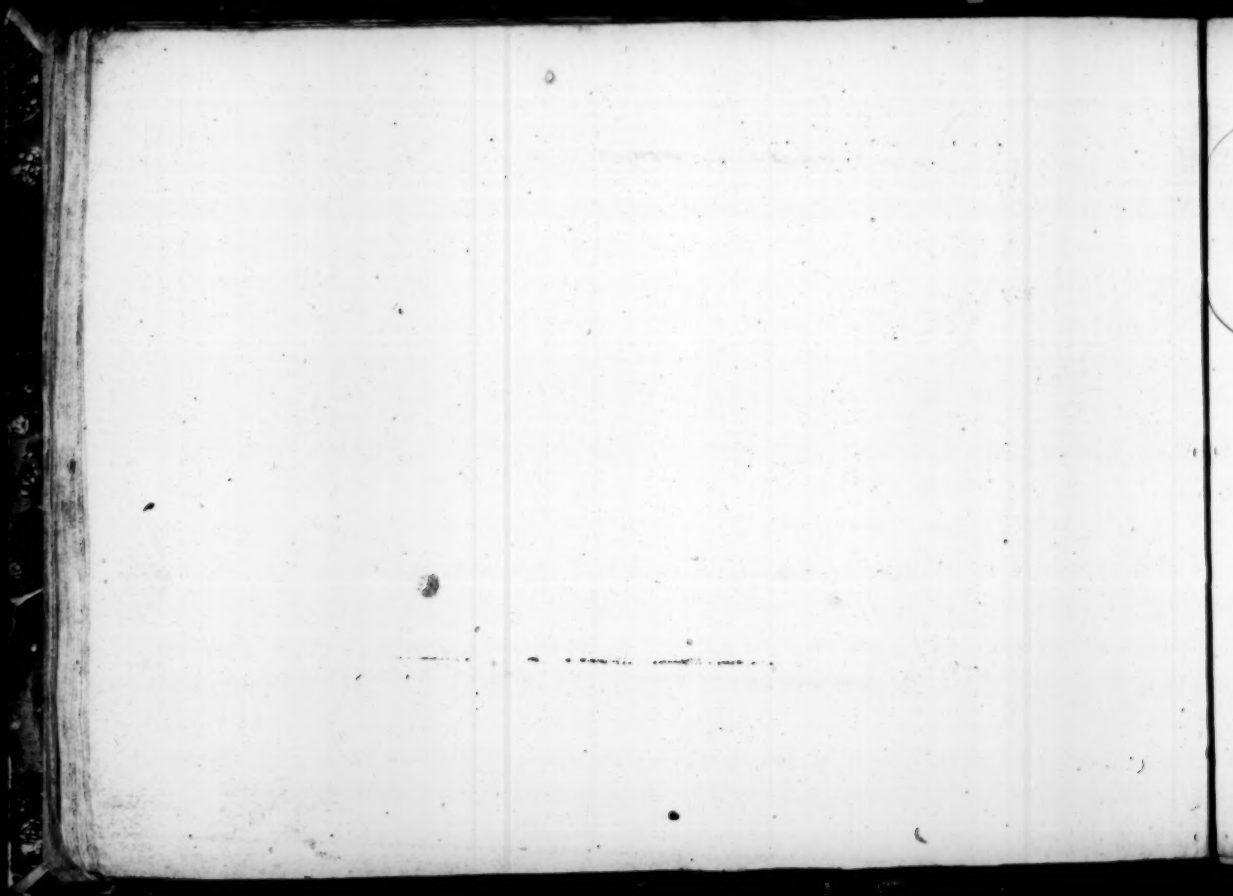
Ager animus, falsa pro veris videt.



22

Quemadmodum scilicet gradus si alias tollas alias incidat non
nullas male haerentes relinquant. ruina periculum struas.
non ascensum. haras: Sic tot malis. tum
victum tum fractum Audium Scri
bendi. quid dignum auribus. aut
probabile potest afferre.

Scribendi Audium transcribere. recte notandum sit



A. a. a. a. a. b. b. b. b. c. c. c. c. d. d. d. d. e. e. e. e. f. f. f. f. f.

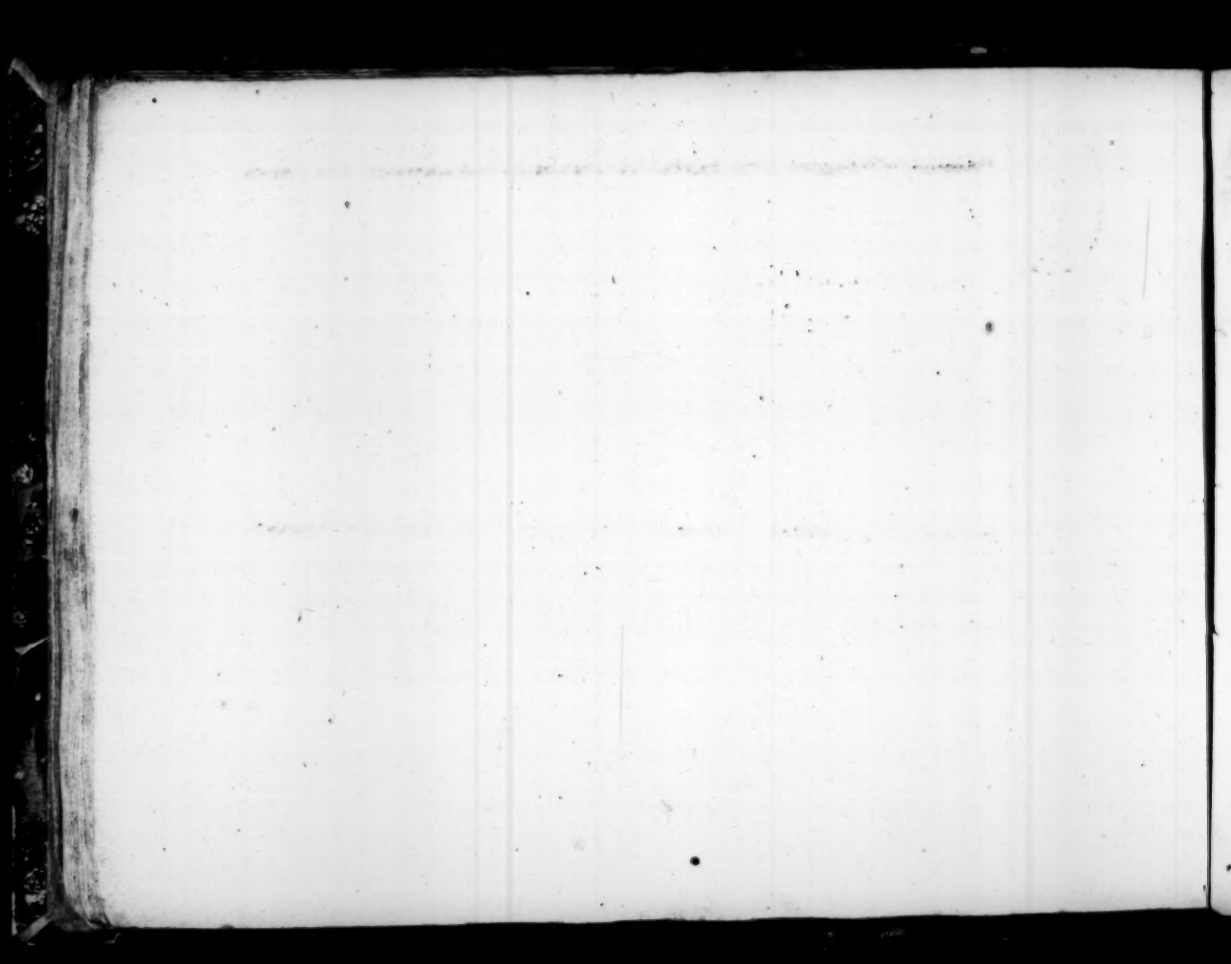
g. g. g. g. h. h. h. h. i. i. i. i. j. k. k. k. k. l. l. l. l. m. m. m. m. m.

n. n. n. n. o. o. o. o. p. p. p. p. q. q. q. q. r. r. r. r. s. s. s. s. s.

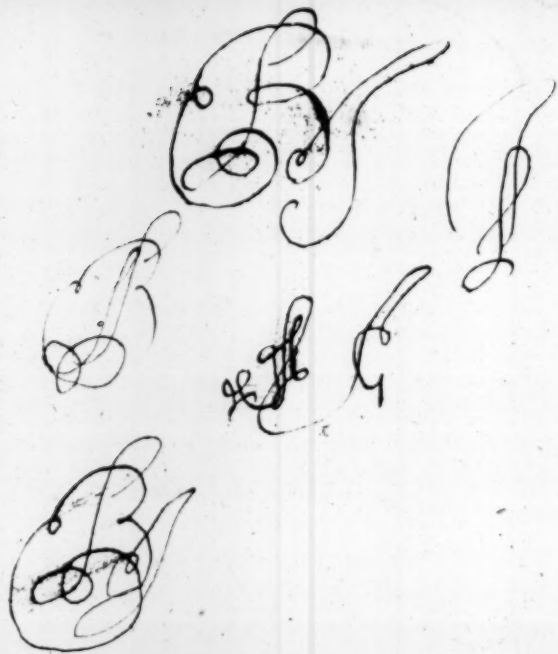
t. t. t. t. u. u. u. u. v. v. v. v. w. w. w. w. x. x. x. x. y. y. y. y. z. z. z. z. G.

A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H. I. K. L. M. N.

O. P. Q. R. S. T. V. W. X. Y. Z.



24
Come auuiceno a un fiume che men to corrodenteco
et con tutta l'acqua in un Letto fa con grandissimo
impeto il suo corso et spaventa lo citta beneto
benissimo murato ma se si divide in piu parti.
perdo la forza Ge passato a guazzoogniuno.
Casi appunto lo forze d'un Esercito. Ge.



25
en heureuse. Et l'homme qui trouve sagesse
et qui abonde en prudence. Meilleur. L'ac
quisition a' icelle que les marchandises d'or
et d'argent: car ses fruits sont les premiers
et tres purs. A b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q
r s t u v x y z zll R.

4 Ar 4



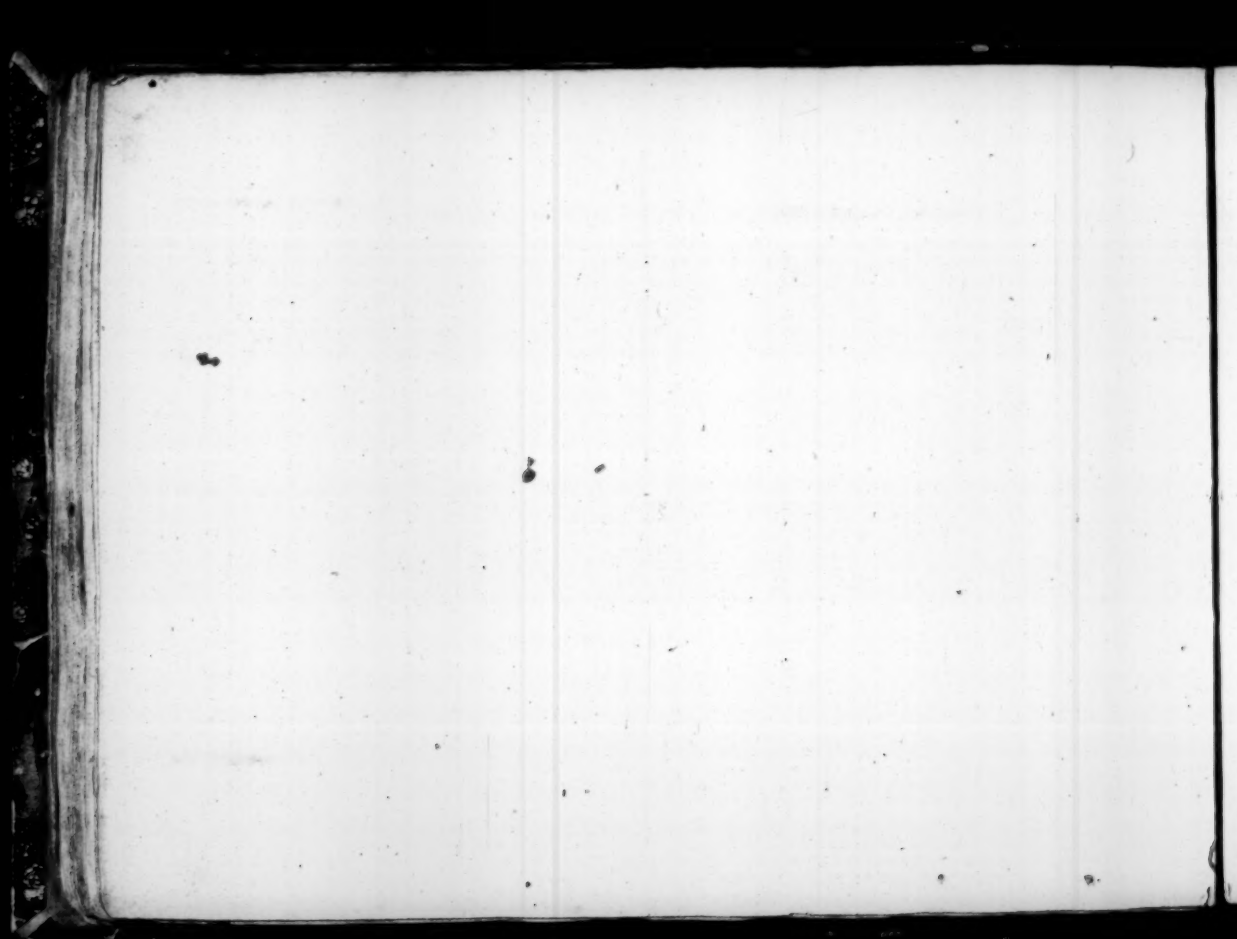
It is not becoming a matter to be inward from a great
 to advise. That that imports a Resolved mindness.
 would have it concealed. In the first case, the Coun-
 seillor must unlock his heart: in the other he must
 seal up his lips. For it is dangerous to be of a
 Great mans Counsaile, and not to keep it.

Gran silentio & gran pender a consenire.



M Robtuo Holmes & ffiammefuo Oanempore y agyumi Embeg. Itzen
 am per dno Anthom Williamfon dno mofiauto dno Cottagato dno tofta
 um Colmbay dno gapiuto Centum & quinquaginta agtas tpe viginti
 agtas pafmpe decem agtas bafa viginti agtas itampn & hney decem
 agtas moze viginti agtas maffa & coram pafmpe pominodi tuncor

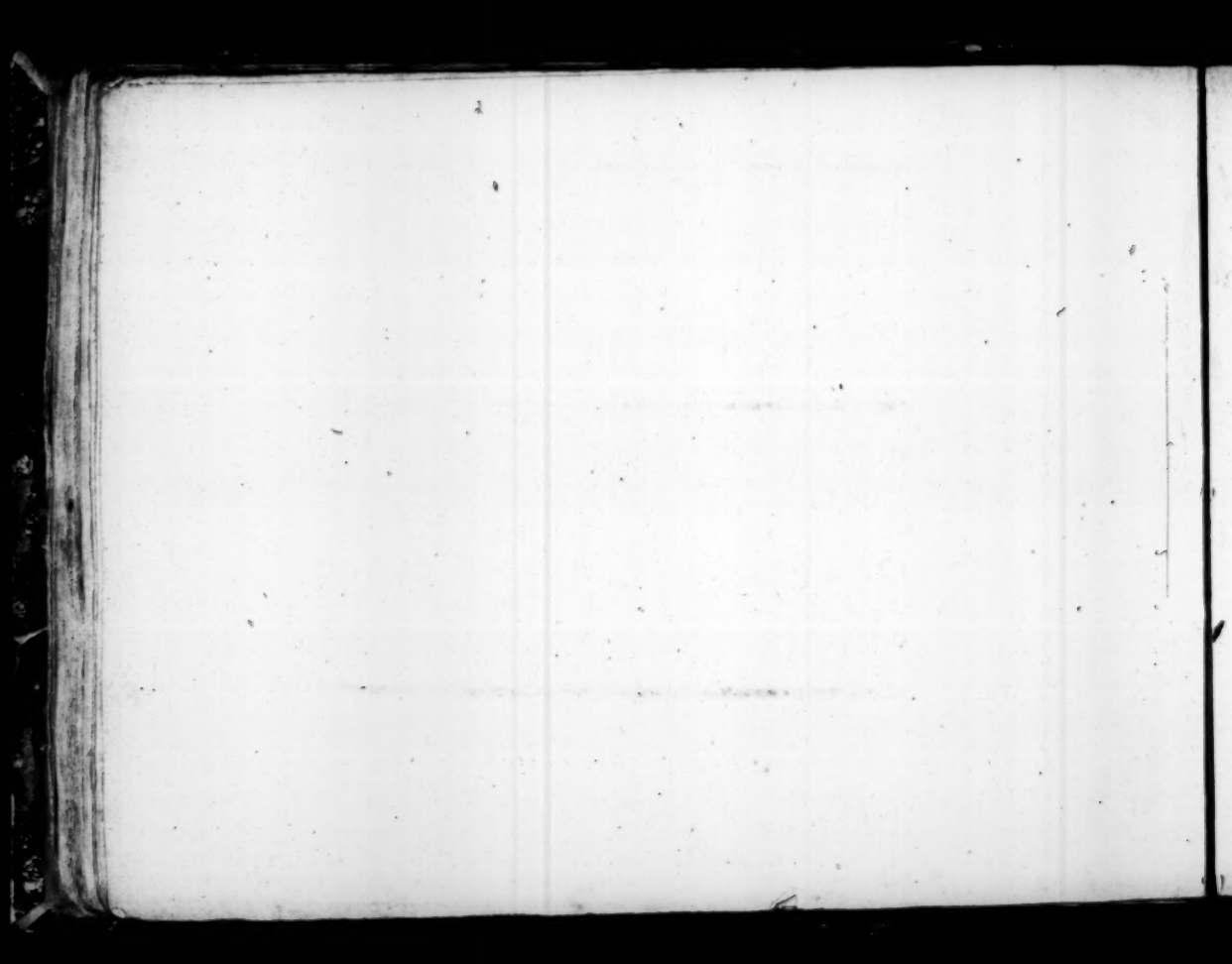
A. n. n. o. b. b. t. r. n. S. v. w. t. e. ee. ff. ff. G. s. w. J. h. J. g. y.
 f. f. f. l. A. y. m. min. R. n. min. G. o. w. p. p. p. f. G. y. y. E. v. z. l.
 G. o. f. o. ff. p. J. r. w. d. n. e. W. W. x. x. x. y. y. y. z. z. p. r.



45

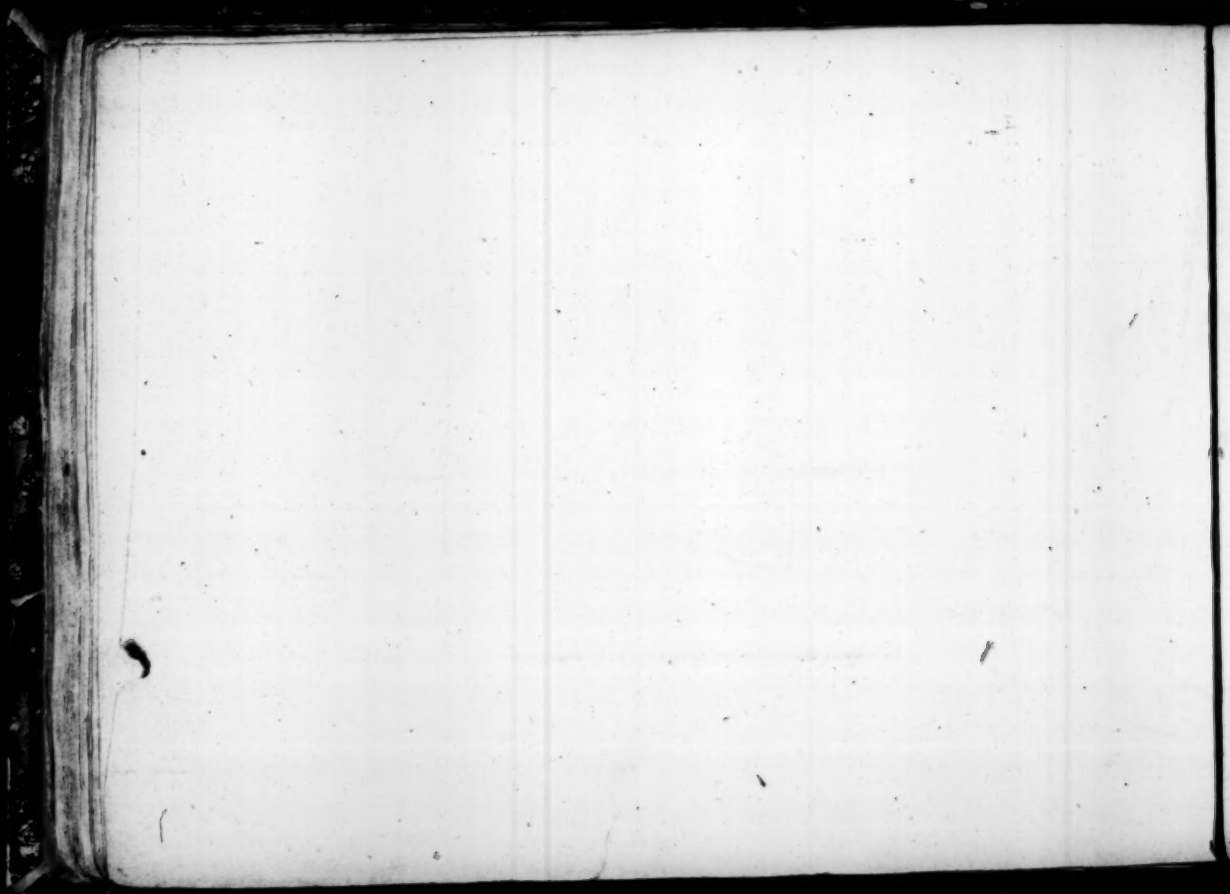
Jacobus Dei gratia Anglie et Norwicie et Hibernie
Rex fidei defensor et: Vir london dñm. Tibi
pripim^o qd attat^h p^hm Johⁿson ihuⁿg^m ita
qd x^m h^ecto ro^m nob^m in Cantella p^ma in et:

A. a. a. B. b. C. c. u. S. d. d. E. e. ee. ff. f. f. ~
G. g. g. h. h. h. i. ij. k. k. k. l. l. l. m. m. m.
N. n. n. O. o. oo. P. p. p. Q. q. q. r. r. r. S. s. s.
T. t. t. U. u. u. u. V. v. v. x. x. x. y. y. z. z. z.



Α. α. α. Β. β. β. Γ. γ. γ. Δ. δ. δ.
 Ε. ε. ε. Ζ. ζ. ζ. Η. η. η. Θ. θ. θ.
 Ι. ι. ι. Κ. κ. κ. Λ. λ. λ. Μ. μ. μ.
 Ν. ν. ν. Ξ. ξ. ξ. Ο. ο. ο. Π. π. π. π.
 Ρ. ρ. ρ. Σ. σ. σ. σ. σ. Τ. τ. τ. Υ. υ. υ.
 Φ. φ. φ. Χ. χ. χ. Ψ. ψ. Ω. ω. ω. Δ. δ.

Οὕτω γὰρ ἠγαπήσεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν
 αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἰσθλασαι, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστευων
 εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπολήται, ἀλλ' ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον.



א. ב. ג. ד. ה. ו. ז. ח. ט. י. כ. ל. מ. נ. ס. ע. פ. צ. ק. ר. ש. ש. ח.

יְהוָה לֹא גָבַהּ לִבִּי וְלֹא רָמִי שִׁנְיָ וְלֹא הִנְכַּחַי
 בְּגִדֹתַי יִבְנֶה לִי מִסְכָּה : אֵבֶל לֹא טִיִּיתִי
 וְלִמְמִיתִי נַפְשִׁי בְּאֵד עָלַי אֲנִי בְּאֵד עָלַי נַפְשִׁי :

Wherefore dost thou desire to receive the Sacrament
for thou hast not first to say a thank



The Pens Excellency.



He Profession of the *Pen* at this day being so vniuersall, and the Professors themselves for the most part so ignorant, and insufficient to vndertake so worthy a function; together with the desire I haue (according to my small talent) to benefit such as are, or would be Practitioners in that commendable Art of FAIR WRITING; were the onely motiues that induced mee to manitest vnto the view of the world, these few lines hereafter ensuing. Wherein before I enter into discourse concerning the Art it selfe, giue me leaue cursorily to demonstrate the manifold abuses which are offered vnto the *Pen* by a number of lame *Pen-men*; who as they doe intrude themselves into the society of Artists, and vsurping the name of *Pen-men*, seeke *detinere Artem in ignorantia*: so by their audacious brags and lying promises, they doe shadow and obscure both the excellency of the *Pen*, and the dignity of those that are indeed true Professors thereof.

B 3

But

9

But I purpose not to heape vp all the abuses which they may be conceiued to offer vnto the *Pen*; for that were to lose my selfe in an endlesse discourse: I will only point at a few which I hold to be the chiefeft, and doe belong principally to matter of Teaching: And those I finde to be foure.

1 Abuse.

First, you shall obserue that these Botchers, (for they deserue no better title) are for the greatest part of them of no standing, nor euer haue had any ground in the Art, onely haue a certaine confused kind of writing, voide e ther of *Life*, *Dexterity*, or *Art* it selfe; and yet notwithstanding they professe, and in their Bills (clapt vpon euery post) promise to performe as much as any whosoeuer. For let any man obserue their Ly-bills, (for so I may very well tearme them) and he shall see how liberall they are in their promises this way, professing to teach any one (not standing vpon the capacity of the pupill) to write a sufficient hand in a month, and some of them doe say, in a fortnight. Yet, if they did but say so it were tollerable, when as they themselues, (I dare be bould to affirme it) may goe so long to Schoole to learne a little, and yet not attaine to the true touch thereof, being fitter for other Mechanicall occupations (wherein some of them, to my knowledge, haue beene brought vp) then for the Profession of this so curious an Art. Whose *Writings* (if they come to the touchstone of Art, which cannot erre, and to the iudgement of Artists, who seldome are deceiued) will proue lame and schoole-boy-like. And although in some of their doings, there may seeme in the eyes of the ignorant,

rant, to be a shew of Art : howbeit *tantum absunt à perfectione, quantum ab ignorantia animi magnitudo*, They come as farre short of those that haue the least skill, as they doe of Perfection.

Next, whereas we that are *Pen-men* hold this as a Maxime in the Art of *Writing*, To yeeld a reason of euery thing we doe, (since *plus apud nos vera ratio ualet, quam vulgopinio*) why, these ignorant Professors are so reasonlesse in all their workes, both of Writing and Teaching, that it is impossible for those whom they teach, or that imitate their doings, to reape any benefit by them, Reason being a second Schoolemaster to bring a man to knowledge in any Art he desires to practise. And certainly (experience tells me that) in the matter of teaching, nothing is more auailable to a learner, then the demonstration of Reason. So that herein appears the second abuse, in that these men, being not able to yeeld a reason of that they professe, doe neuerthelesse (Parrat-like) boast of their skill, and in their papers giue out vaunting speeches, as if so be they were the onely fellows that would (as we say) boare away the bell : whereas if a man take a view of any of their workes or writings, he shall find therein no appearance either of Truth, Reason or Art : but on the contrary, such weake stufte as he would rather imagine it to be the scratching of a Hen, then the worke of a profest *Pen-man*.

Thirdly, (because I would be brieue) by these their large (yet lying) promises they blind the eyes of the common sort, who are rather affected with

with nouelties and strange deuises, though they appeare in nothing but vaine ostentations, then with the soundnesse of iudgement and exquisite-nesse of skill, wherewith Artists are indued. For is it not a common thing amongst them, as well in their residence about this famous City (which God knowes swarmes with them) as in their curricular Progresses ouer all places in this kingdome; to carry about them, yea and to set in open view the writings and Tables of other men, and affirme they are their owne? I appeale to none but to my owne experience herein; howbeit I am perswaded diuers others (and which I know to) will concurre with me in this truth. And what is this, thinke you, but *deceptio visus*, a blinding of the world with shewes of what they are not?

4. *Abuse.*

Lastly, they doe also hinder the commodity of those that goe as far beyond them in excellency of writing, as the Sunne exceeds the Moone, and that two waies.

First, by their base and ignominious carriage of themselves in their accustomed cosening, wherby men take occasion to conceiue so ill of others of the same Profession, that it is almost impossible for any one (do or mean he neuer so well,) to haue entertainment where they haue beene before.

And secondly, by the multitude of them, which is so great that a man can go into no corner of this City, but he shall see and heare of a world of squirting Teachers, not one of them almost worthy to carry a *Pen-mans* Inck-horne after him, much lesse to beare the name of a good *Pen-man*.
Diuers

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Diuers other abuses there are which these men offer vnto the excellency of the *Pen* and *Pen-men*: But lest I should seeme prolix in so slight an argument, I will here leaue them to the censure of the skilfull, and to those that to their cost haue made tryall of them. Forasimuch as my intent is not so much to detect the folly of those vnworthy Professors (which is palpable enough to euery one) as to entreat of the Art it selfe, reducing all that I intend to speake in commendation thereof, vnto these three heads:

- { 1 To the *Antiquitie*
2 To the *Excellencie*
3 To the *Diuersitie* } thereof.

First, for the *Antiquity* of it. Some affirme that the vse of this Art was ^{1 Part.} found out in the very infancy of the world: and that *Enoch* the seauenth ^{*Ioseph. lib. 1.*} from *Adam* had skill therein: For *Iosephus* credibly reports, that one of the ^{*de Antiquit.*} Prophecies which *Enoch* wrote on pillars of stone, remained euen in his time; or at least some ruine thereof. But others doe ascribe those pillars to *Seth*, who liued before *Enoch*. Howsoeuer, if it were but as ancient as the Law, it carries with it age enough.

As for the Art of *Printing*, which came vp but yesterday (in comparison) and is now in much request, that can no way blemish the Art of *Writing*, forasmuch as *Writing* is the President by which *Printing* is effected, and therefore the more worthy. For as we say in Arithmeticke, Out of the

greater the lesser is deducted: So that, that whence the deduction is made, is greater then the deduction it selfe.

I shall not neede to argue much vpon the *Antiquity* of this Art, in regard of the vniuersall knowledge thereof. What worthy and notable acts were heretofore done by any, either Diuine, Morall, Legall or Martiall, but were reserved to after-ages by the meanes of *Writing*? And I wonder how we should euer haue attained to any kind of learning, had we not had the scrolls of our learned fore-fathers to peruse and looke into, as also the holy Scriptures, *In quibus sunt omnes thesauri sapientia ac scientia reconditi*?

2 Part.

The next thing to be entreated of, is the *Excellency* of the Art of *Writing*, which doth evidently appeare in these two things:

1 Desiderio.

First, in the earnest desire that all men for the most part haue to attaine vnto it: for those things which are rare and delectable, are sought for and pursued of all men, that's a rule in Nature: Now the Art of *Writing* is a most excellent and delectable Art, and therefore of all men much desired.

2 Necessitate

Secondly, the Excellency appeares in the Necessity thereof: for it is necessary for all (you know) to write; and those that cannot, finde what a multitude of inconueniences doe come vpon them for the want of it. And herein (by the way) suffer me not to giue conuience to that vngrounded opinion of many, who affirme *Writing* to be altogether vnecessary for women. If by it any foule busineses are contracted, and thereby much hurt effected; Is this to be laid vpon the Art it selfe? Or is not rather the ill disposition

An Answer

to a common

Objection.

5
disposition of those to be charged herewith, who make it the instrument, whereby they bring to passe euill actions? For not the vse but the abuse of a thing is it which makes it odious. If it were otherwise, why then soule imputations may be laid vpon the best vertues, which of themselves are immaculate.

To be briefe, the Art of *Writing* is so excellent, and of such necessary vse, that none ought to be without some knowledge therein, since the excellency of no Art without it can be made knowne or manifest. And if any Art be commendable in a woman, (I speake not of their ordinary workes wrought with the needle, wherein they excell) it is this of *Writing*; whereby they, commonly hauing not the best memories (especially concerning matters of moment) may commit many worthy and excellent things to Writing, which may occasionally minister vnto them matter of much solace.

Hereby also, the secrets that are and ought to be, betweene Man and Wife, Friend and Friend, &c. in either of their absences may be confined to their owne priuacy, which (amongst other things) is not the meanest dignity.

Lastly, the practise of this Art is so necessary for women, and consequently so excellent, that no woman suruiuing her husband, and who hath an estate left her, ought to be without the vse thereof, at least in some reasonable manner: For thereby shee comes to a certainty of her estate, with-

out trusting to the reports of such as are vsually imployed to looke into the same: whereas otherwise for want of it, she is subiect to the manifold deceits now vsed in the world, and by that meanes plungeth her selfe into a multitude of inconueniences.

Wherefore their opinion who would barre women from the vse of this excellent faculty of *Writing*, is vtterly lame, and cannot by force of argument be maintained.

And although the *Excellency* of this Art (to speake of the curiosity thereof) be somewhat shadowed by the dulnesse of some Mechanicall spirits, who seldome haue skill in any thing out of their owne element, that thinke *Writing* to be onely a hand-labour, and so they can write to keepe a dirty shop-booke, they care for no more; neuer esteeming the commendable manner of faire and orderly *Writing*, which ought in all businesse to be obserued, as well in keeping of Bookes for Merchants and others, as in all kinde of Engrosments, appertaining to the Law, &c: Yet notwithstanding the splendor & grace of *writing* shines most excellently in the scrolls of skillfull Artitts, as in the writing of some may appeare to the that haue insight.

And what should I say of the Excellency of this Art? Is it not one of the hands by which not only this, but al other common-wealths are vpholden? The key which opens a passage to the descrying and finding out of innumerable treasures? The handmaid to memory? The Register and Recorder of all Arts? And the very mouth whereby a man familiarly conferreth with

his

his friend, though the distance of thousands of miles be betwixt them?

Infinite other things might be spoken concerning the Excellency of this Art of *Writing*; and where I faile in the setting forth thereof, assist me with your manifold imaginations.

The third and last thing to be discuffed of in commendation of this Art, 3 *Part.* is the *Diuerfity* thereof. I meane the diuers kinds of *hands* which are now vsed among vs. For although they all goe vnder the name of writing; yet they are to be distinguished according to the diuerfity of them. Howbeit my purpose is not to clog my discourfe with an enumeration of euery idle hand that may be written: for that were absurd, and out of the element of a *Pen-man*. I will only entreat of those which are the principall; and wherein the most Art, the greatest curiosity, and the rarest dexterity of the *Artist* is to be manifested: and they are these which follow, *viz.*

- 1 *Secretary.*
- 2 *Bastard-Secretary, or Text.*
- 3 *Roman.*
- 4 *Italian.*
- 5 *Court.*
- 6 *Chancery.*

Of each of which I will briefly speake somewhat, onely by way of distinction

inction, in regard I would not willingly weary the Reader with superfluous circumstances, or detain him long from that which followeth.

1 *Secretary.*

For the first, viz: the *Secretary*, which is so termed (as I conceive) partly because it is the Secretaries common hand; and partly also, because it is the onely vsuall hand of England, for dispatching of all manner of bu-
nells for the most part, whatsoeuer.

*Secretarius à
secretis.*

I might adde hereunto the super-excellency of this hand, in respect of any other hand; for that the very denomination thereof, imports some things in it that are not easily to be found out. And true it is, that whoso-
uer doth practise it (according to the true nature of it) shall perceiue there-
in many secret and subtile passages of the hand, which few, but those that
haue bene well grounded therein by a true Artist, are able to comprehend:
but I affect breuity.

To speake of the kindes of *Secretary*, is (in these daies) no easie matter:
for some haue deuised many, and those so strange and disguised; that there
is hardly any true straine of a right *Secretary* in them. For mine owne part,
I make distinction betwixt the *Sett*, *Facill*, and *Fast hands*, of which three
I shall (God willing) by and by propose some few examples.

2 *Bastard se-
cretary.*

The next is *Bastard-Secretary*, and so named by the best, because it is
gotten of the *Secretary*, as those that haue any skill may perceiue. This
is a Hand not so vsuall as the former; yet of great validity, and for diuers
purposes exceeding gracefull; as for Engrossements, Epitaphs for Tombes,
Titles

Titles of Bookes, and many other vses, which would bee too tedious for me here to recite.

The third is *Roman*, which hath his denomination from the place where (it seemes) it was first written, viz: *Rome*. A hand of great account, and of much vse in this Realme, especially in the Vniuersities: and it is conceiued to be the easiest hand that is written with Pen, and to be taught in the shortest time: Therefore it is vsually taught to women, for as much as they (hauing not the patience to take any great paines, besides phantasticall and humorforme) must be taught that which they may instantly learne: otherwise they are vncertaine of their proceedings, because their minds are (vpon light occasion) easily drawne from the first resolution.

The fourth is *Italian*, a hand in nature not much different from *Roman*, but in manner and forme, of much incongruity thereunto. This is a hand which of late is growne very vsuall, and is much affected by diuers: for indeed, it is a most excellent and curious hand, and to be written with singular command of hand; else it will appeare but very ragged and vile; and if the Pen be taken off in coniunction of the letters, it is neither approueable, nor Pen-man-like, but meere botching, which is detestable.

The fifth is *Court-hand*; so called, for that it is of great vse in those two famous Courts of the *Kings Bench*, and *Common Pleas*. It is a hand somewhat difficult to write well, and hee that continually writes it, may happily come to perfection in that; but for other hands (if he could write ne-

uet

uer so many) let him neuer looke to write any of them well: for it is able to marre them all. I am not reasonlesse in this opinion, but able (vnto any that please) to produce the cause.

6 *Chancery.*

The last is *Chancery*, which euery man knowes to be written no where but in the *High Court of Chancery*, and in other Offices which haue reference thereunto. I am of opinion, that this hand being well written, is far more gracefull then the *Court*, and equally difficult. It hath a kinde of mixture of the *Court* and *Bastard-Secretary* in it, which any man of iudgement may easily perceiue.

There are two kinds hereof, the *Sett* and *Fast*; the difference betweene them is not little, as they that are Clerks well know.

Thus much, or rather thus little, I thought good to deliuer, touching the *Antiquity, Excellency, and Diversity* of the Art of *Writing*.

Now here shall follow certaine peeces and Examples of the sixe seuerall heads before mentioned; wherein I haue endeauored to fit my selfe with extraordinary matter for coppies; holding it an absurd thing in a good *Pen-man* to make choice of such fustian stuffe, as many doe, onely to set out their Coppies, and make the writing to seeme gracefull to the eye. Also I haue laboured to be so perspicuous in the nature of euery hand, as that the meanest may imitate me, and reape some benefit by me.

Thus

Thus from the gate or entrance, I haue brought you into the house; where you haue seen sundry ornaments and peeces of Art: and now (if you be not weary) goe with me into one roome more, and there take a view of the implements and tooles, with which you must worke, if you meane to proue a Pen-man; and learne how you are to vse and handle them. But before we enter, steppe aside with me, and I will giue you notice of certaine obseruations, which are necessary to be knowne of euery one that will practise this Art.

Obseruations for writing.

Every one that intends either to be a Teacher of others, or a Practitioner for himselfe; ought to know that in the Art of Letters, or Writing, three things are to be obserued, viz.

- 1 *Ratio.*
- 2 *Modus.*
- 3 *Species.*

The former whereof, which is Reason, hath reference to the vnderstan- *Generally.*
ding, and doth most of all concerne the speculative part of *Writing.*

The two latter, viz. the *manner* and *shape* (which of euery letter
D through-

throughout the Alphabet is to be obserued) doth consist in the carriage of the hand; and these are the practique parts of *Writing*.

Particularly.

1 *Ratio.*

First, the *Reason* of euery letter must be found out; as why such a letter being made thus and thus, seemes more gracefull then being made so and so. Likewise, as for euery letter, and the least touch with the Pen, a reason must be giuen: So it is in the coniunction, knitting or ioyning together of the letters; Why the Pen must here be taken off, and why there not taken off? why the nature of this letter will admit the taking off of the Pen; and why the nature of that letter doth require the contrary. These things must be resolved to the learner, by Reason; else how shall he vnderstand to write well?

2 *Modus.*

Next, the *manner* of making euery letter must be knowne too. For if a Scholer be taught to frame his letters after an ill, corrupt and contrary way: It cannot be that hee should euer write well. And although perchance some doe write sufficient and seruiceable hands, that neuer were taught the true way of framing their Characters: Yet notwithstanding what they doe, they (as wee say) doe by rote, not vnderstanding, or conceiuing how to write. For I dare vndertake, that such as haue not bene rightly grounded herein, are neuer able to know or iudge of the goodnesse or badnesse of a letter. Therefore it were to bee wished, that men would reframe from these Botchers that spoyle so many, and bring vp such a multitude of Scriblers, nor fit for any mans employment: and that they would

would (not standing vpon the pay, as many ignorant persons do) put their youth to such as are able to teach, and are knowne to be good Pen-men.

Lastly, as the *reason* and the *manner* of euery Letter is to be obserued: so the *shape* (which giueth *life* and *spirit* to writing) must be knowne also: for *3 Species* therein the very substance of *Writing* consisteth.

Herein a man ought to be very wary and circumspect, concerning the carriage of his Pen: that is, that hee doe not presse vpon that part of the letter which requires a fauourable touch; nor be sparing in that part which requires the contrary: for in eicher the *spirit* of the letter is dulled and made blockish, so that the *shape* cannot then be good.

It shall not be amiss for the diligent Practitioner, more specially to obserue these few briefe Rules concerning Writing, viz.

First, to size his *Writing*, that is, to make the depth and fulnesse proportionable.

2 Then to obserue the *whites*, for that's a maine matter.

3 Lastly, to keepe an equall distance, as well betweene letter and letter, as betweene word and word.

These three being the chiefeft things wherein the grace of *writing* consisteth.

In the next place I hold it necessary to set downe certaine rules for the making and holding of the *Pen*, with other things thereunto appertaining.

Observations or rules for the making of the Pen.

After you haue gotten you a good Pen-knife well edg'd and smooth'd vpon a hoane, and good second quills, either of Goose or Rauens, scraped with the backe of your knife, begin to make your Pen thus :

1 First, holding your quill the right side vpwards, cut off about the third part of it flat along to the end.

2 And turning it on the backe side, cut off the very end of it alsoape ; which being done, it will be forked.

3 Then, holding it still on the backe, make a little cut in the very midst of the quill.

4 When you haue done so, take the end of your knife if it haue a pegg, or else another quill, and make a slit vp suddenly, euen in the cut you gaue before.

5 Which being done, turne your quill on the right side againe, and begin to cut a little thought aboue the slit, on that side which is next your left hand, and so continue cutting by degrees, till you thinke you haue sufficiently cut that side. But herein you must bee very wary you cut not off too much of the slit ; for then your pen will be too hard, and if you leaue too much also, it will be ouer soft.

A CAUTION.

6 Then

6 Then euen againſt the place you beganne to cut the firſt ſide, cut the other likewiſe, till you haue made them both of an equall thinneſſe: and then trying it by liſting vp the ſlit vpon the naile of your thumbe, you ſhall ſee whether it be too ſoft or too hard: if either, bring it to a meane by adding more ſlit to it, if you ſee it be too hard; or by taking ſome away, if you perceiue it to be too ſoft.

Laſtly, herein lies the difficulty, *viz.* in the nibbing of the Pen: wherein I obſerue this rule, that placing it on the naile of my thumbe, or middle finger, I hold my knife ſomewhat ſloaping, and cut the end of the nibbe, not quite off, but before my knife come off, I turne him downe-right, and ſo cut the nibbe cleane away, on both ſides alike; contrary to that old vulgar rule, *Dextra pars penne, &c.* Now if my pen be to write full, I cut off ſo much the more of the nibbe; if ſmall, ſo much the leſſe,

Note that if your quill (as many haue) haue teeth, you are to pare it on the back thinly, to take them away.

Obſerue that this nibbing of the Pen muſt be done at once though it ſeeme two ſeueral cuts, otherwiſe it will not write currantly,

Obſervations for the holding of the Pen.

1 Hold your Pen betweene your thumbe, your fore-finger, and your middle-finger: *viz.* with the top of your thumbe, the bottome or lower part of your forefinger, and the toppe or vpper part of your middle finger.

2 And let your other two fingers ioyne to the reſt a little thought with-in them; ſuffering none of your fingers with which you hold the Pen, to touch paper: for that is the proper office of the fourth and little fingers, by

which the strength of the others is maintained.

3 Lastly, for the right vsage of the Pen, when you can hold it; you shall obserue, that it ought to be held directly vpon the full: for that is most proper, being that the nib of the Pen must be cut euen, otherwise it is subiect to spatter. Howbeit, I deny not, but in the fetching of any compasse, it must be held a little inclining to the left side: for so the Pen will giue full where it should, and small also where it is required.

A Caueat.

Note, that the Pen must be held very gently in the hand, without griping, because of two inconueniences which come thereby.

1 The one is, that the command of hand (which otherwise by the easie holding thereof is to be attained) is hereby vterly lost.

2 The other is, that by this griping, or hard holding of the Pen, a man is kept from a speedy dispatch of that he goes about to write: both which are maine enemies to Clerke-like writing.

M. B. his private opinion concerning Pen-manship.

1 First, it is a most absurd and hatefull quality, to vse any manner of botching in the Art of *Writing*; yea, though it be in a letter of the greatest vncertainty.

2 Again, I am of opinion, that although in the writing of some *Hands*,

(as

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(as of the *Sett Secretary* and some other) it be now and then tollerable to take off the Pen in coniunction of the letters, for the more formall writing thereof: yet that in the *Facill*, but especially, in the *Fast Secretary*, it is so iniurious to the perfection of Clerke-like writing, that I cannot free him that vseth it, from the imputation of a meere Bletcher.

3 The like opinion doe I retaine of those, who must write euery thing that is to be performed in any reasonable fashion, and with credit, with or by a *line*: for therein they shew themselues rather Carpenters then Writers, and cannot (in the iudgement of Artists) be rightly tearmed good *Pen-men*.

4 Also (in my iudgement) he cannot be reputed a good *Pen-man* that is not able vpon an instant, with any *Pen, Inke, or Paper*, and in the presence of whomsoever, to manifest some skill: Being that the rare & absolute quality of the Pen, consisteth not in the painting, pricking forth, and tedious writing of sixe lines priuately in a mans Study, with the best implements: but a sweet command of hand, and a certaine conceiued presumption.

5 Lastly, to vse any strange, borrowed, or inforced tricks and knots, in or about writing, other then with the celerity of the hand are to be performed, is rather to set an inglorious glosse vpon a simple peece of worke, then to giue a comely lustre to a perfect patterne; they being as vnnaturall to *Writing* as a surfet is to a temperate mans body.

FINIS.